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New York

President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of His Holiness Pope John Paul II

The President (*spoke in French*): This morning, before we take up the item on our agenda, we have the sad duty to pay tribute to the memory of the late Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church, His Holiness John Paul II, who passed away on Saturday, 2 April 2005.

Throughout his pontificate, John Paul II displayed a unique moral authority and exceptional charisma, both as a spiritual leader and as a statesman. A source of inspiration for much of humanity, he worked tirelessly to promote peace and to bring together people of all nations, races and creeds. Until the final moments of his long and rich life, Pope John Paul II did not hesitate to travel to all regions of the world to bring in person his message of peace and fraternity.

In his statement before the General Assembly on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the Pope reminded the world that the United Nations must be "a moral centre where all nations of the world feel at home and develop a shared awareness of being, as it were, a family of nations" (*A/50/PV.20, p.5*). Ten years later, in this year of 2005, the sixtieth anniversary of the Organization, those words of the Pope maintain all their power.

We will remember him as a man of great courage and humility in the service of peace, justice and dialogue among men and nations.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I convey my most sincere condolences to the Vatican community, to all Catholics and to all those throughout the world who have been touched and inspired by the life of His Holiness, Pope John Paul II.

I invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of His Holiness.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The President (*spoke in French*): This afternoon at 3 o'clock, we shall pay tribute to the memory of the late head of State of the Principality of Monaco, His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III, who passed away the morning of 6 April 2005.

I now give the floor to the representative of Malawi, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Chimphamba (Malawi): It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing away of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, a great friend of Africa. At least 147 million Catholics across Africa are mourning his death. The whole continent of Africa joins them and the rest of the world in that loss and bereavement.

Since his election in 1978, Pope John Paul II visited more than 10 African countries. His concerns

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and love for the continent of Africa will always be cherished and celebrated.

Pope John Paul II was a voice for peace and justice in the world. He carried the torch of peace throughout the world. A good communicator, he was able, through his influence and his voice of wisdom, to persuade many to take the path of peace, not of violence. He represented true leadership as he continued to embrace all — women, men and children of every race, nationality, religion, economic status and political ideals — in the search for tolerance and harmony. He planted the seeds of love and unity for all of mankind.

To Africa, Pope John Paul II was an ally in the promotion of peace, democracy, human rights, social justice and development. He was an embodiment of compassion who represented the poor, the voiceless, the marginalized, the desperate and the oppressed. Africa will always remember him as a true friend and a pope for all people.

Africa commends him for his tireless efforts and his contribution towards peace and justice on the continent and throughout the world. Africa pays tribute to his openness, dynamism and courage. His achievements will always be appreciated. He leaves a foundation for justice and peace that we ought to build upon. Africa remains hopeful that his legacy will continue to reign across the globe.

On behalf of Africa and on my own behalf, I wish to convey a deep message of condolence to all Catholics across the world. May the soul of Pope John Paul II rest in peace.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bhutan, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. Penjo (Bhutan): We are deeply saddened by the passing away of His Holiness Pope John Paul II. His Holiness was not only the spiritual leader of the Catholic Church, but also a true leader who devoted his life to the cause of peace, harmony and justice. We must honour His Holiness by renewing our resolve to promote the values that he embodied and tirelessly promoted throughout his life.

On behalf of the Member States of the Asian Group, I offer our deepest condolences to the Holy See and to our brothers and sisters in the Catholic community. His Holiness will always be remembered with deep affection and profound respect by the millions whose lives he touched and influenced.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Estonia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mrs. Intelmann (Estonia): It was with deepest sorrow and grief that we learned of the death of His Holiness Pope John Paul II.

We are bidding farewell to a great man and a great son of Poland, a genuine humanist of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, a tireless pope of peace, love and forgiveness. Let us pay tribute to the great works of John Paul II, which were milestones marking the path taken by the Catholic Church and the fortunes of millions of people throughout the world.

As a great humanist and protector of morality, Pope John Paul II dedicated his whole life to spiritual liberation, moral self-betterment and the development of tolerance among mankind. He was able to present moral values in a simple and understandable way that helped people in an ever more complicated world to remain true to themselves and to prosper. His message of peace and love found resonance and gave hope to many around the world.

This Pope from behind the iron curtain, who unfailingly guarded the memory of history and reminded many Eastern Europeans of their European identity based on the foundations of the Christian cultural heritage, became a moral point of reference for millions of people — believers and non-believers — all over the world and a great apostle of unity and peaceful coexistence. His influence stretched beyond the boundaries of religions and political beliefs.

Today we are paying tribute to the Pope of the civilization of love, filled with gratitude for the gift of this pontificate. We thank him for 26 years of service to the universal church and to the world. We offer our deepest condolences to Catholics and to others who were touched by his blessings, by his compassion and by his dedication to non-violence and peace.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Trinidad and Tobago, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Sealy (Trinidad and Tobago): We the Member States of the Latin American and Caribbean

Group wish to express our deepest sorrow at the passing of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, the spiritual leader of the world's Roman Catholics, who brought moral leadership to our world and who, by his words and deeds, touched the lives of so many people. We furthermore wish to express our heartfelt condolences to the delegation of the Holy See and to the delegation of Poland.

More than 1 billion people worldwide profess the Catholic faith, including an estimated 90 per cent of the population of Latin America and the Caribbean. The influence of Pope John Paul II went far beyond his own congregation and reached people of many different faiths who were also moved by his compassion, humility and sense of social justice. He was a genuinely charismatic figure and an enormous force for good in the world.

The Pilgrim Pope, as he came to be known, had the papacy thrust upon him when, in 1978, His Holiness Pope John Paul I passed away. At age 58 John Paul II became the first Slavic pope, the first non-Italian pope in 455 years and the youngest pope in modern history. At his death he was the third-longest-serving pontiff. His influence on the world stage was almost immediate. From the beginning of his papacy he showed himself to be a humanist. He became a passionate advocate for the dignity of every human being, for freedom, for human rights and for religious tolerance. He became the voice of the poor, the dispossessed, the disenfranchised and the weak in society. He also promoted the sanctity of human life. He steadfastly reaffirmed the Church's position on a number of important issues and had a special love for youth.

Spirituality lay at the heart of his papacy, and he stood for the primacy of the spiritual over the material. He was committed to religious freedom and interreligious dialogue and reconciliation. He opened the channels of communication between different religions. He was the first pope to visit a mosque, he made conciliatory gestures to the Jewish people and he tried to heal the rift within the Christian churches. His untiring devotion to his holy mission despite his great suffering during his latter years was an inspiration to many and testimony to his exceptional character and to the profound life he led.

We the Member States of the Latin American and Caribbean Group are deeply saddened by the passing of one of the great moral leaders of our time who has left an indelible mark on human history. His Holiness will be remembered for his steadfast commitment to peace and to humanity and for upholding the inherent values of the human spirit.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Sweden, who will speak on behalf of the Group Western European and other States.

Mr. Lidén (Sweden): As Chairman of the Group of Western European and other States, I would like to extend my deepest condolences and sympathies to the Holy See, all Catholics and Christians around the world on the passing of Pope John Paul II. We have all lost a great spiritual leader, a world leader known for his tireless call to uphold human dignity and for his fight against social injustice. He will be remembered in particular for his positive role in ending the division of Europe and for his work to achieve better relations between different faiths. He poured his energy into the Church, the worldwide church of many nations and many people. During his many journeys around the world he was met with devoted love and respect.

Pope John Paul II has now found peace and handed himself over to God. His death is mourned all over the world, from his Polish hometown to the Philippines, Latin America, Africa and many other places. Let me end by agreeing with the Scotsman Sir Tom Farmer, who said, "There have been many, many Popes throughout history, but this one will be remembered as Pope John Paul the Great".

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of the United States of America, who will speak on behalf of the host country.

Mrs. Patterson (United States of America): The American people have a special place in their hearts for His Holiness Pope John Paul II. He came to the United States seven times, visiting cities as far from each other as New York and Anchorage, as well as many points in between. During his travels he won the respect and admiration of Americans of all backgrounds. He did the same in his trips to most of the countries represented in the United Nations, inspiring the devotion of persons of good faith and, in the process, becoming a force for good everywhere he travelled.

We should not forget that Pope John Paul II contributed enormously to international peace and reconciliation. His diplomatic efforts had a direct

impact on the cold war and helped bring it to an end. That, in turn, gave new vigour to the United Nations. Perhaps more important than John Paul II's action on the world stage was the profound effect he had on individuals. He inspired and encouraged persons of all nations, races and religions to be more sensitive to human diversity and to the need for tolerance and mutual respect.

As a man who was seen in person by more people than any other figure in history, his message extolling the dignity of each individual has had incalculable impact. He inspired us to believe that the diversity of our great human family is based on the inherent dignity of each human being and enriches us all. I would like to recall that in 1995 Pope John Paul II came to this building and spoke on issues of universal concern, issues that are the very reason the Organization exists. He noted that men and women throughout the world, even when threatened by violence, have taken the risk of freedom, asking to be given a place in social, political and economic life that is commensurate with their dignity as free human beings.

During his papacy the Church played a key role in bringing together warring parties to achieve reconciliation. Those efforts have brought peace and healing to areas plagued by fear and repression and have allowed many who had known only strife to enjoy the fruits of freedom. His Holiness John Paul II's life and legacy challenge us to seek peace and promote freedom throughout the world. His example should be our guide in seeking truth and understanding and serving others and in working to restore hope and dignity to all.

In closing, I would like to extend to our colleagues in the Observer Mission of the Holy See, those in Poland's Mission to the United Nations and, indeed, to all those who looked to Pope John Paul II as a spiritual guide and, in his own words, "a pilgrim of love, of truth and of hope", my Government's deepest sympathies. As President Bush said shortly after the pontiff's passing,

> "Pope John Paul II was, himself, an inspiration to millions of Americans, and to so many more around the world. We will always remember the humble, wise and fearless priest who became one of ... history's great moral leaders. We're grateful to God for sending such a man, a son of Poland, who became the Bishop of Rome and a hero for the ages."

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Turkey, who will speak on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Mr. İlkin (Turkey): As the Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) group at the United Nations, I would like to express the heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies of the peoples of our member States on the passing away of Pope John Paul II. Indeed, the international community as a whole has lost one of the most respected religious leaders of our time, who was a symbol of peace, humanism and compassion.

During his tenure as the head of the Vatican and the Catholic Church, Pope John Paul II personified peace, brotherhood, tolerance, righteousness and the co-existence of all religions. His tireless efforts to change our world for the better and his preaching for cooperation and solidarity in the face of challenges before humanity won the respect and affection of all peoples around the globe.

The Secretary-General of the OIC also paid tribute to the late Pope for his policies based on devotion to peace and the rejection of war, irrespective of their objectives. He said:

> "With his death the world has lost a great spiritual leader who always held fast to noble values, a great statesman who courageously stood in defence of justice and rejected injustice and oppression."

Pope John Paul II was an exceptional and exemplary spiritual leader who was fully committed to dialogue among religions, cultures and civilizations. His dedication to multiculturalism was reflected through the many meetings held at the Vatican under his leadership. He always expressed feelings of friendship and compassion towards the Muslim world and to its leaders on all Islamic religious occasions. It is noteworthy that he was the first Pope to visit a mosque. He was also warmly welcomed by all the States members of the OIC group which he visited.

The passing away of Pope John Paul II is a significant loss for all humanity. On this sad occasion, we share the deep sense of loss of all our Catholic brothers and sisters and express once again our sincere

feelings of condolence and sympathy to the whole Christian world.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Luxembourg, who will speak on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Hoscheit (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): Almost 10 years ago from this very rostrum, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, His Holiness John Paul II made a historic statement, full of humanism and compassion, in which he expressed his full support for the ideals and values of the United Nations. In that highly intellectual statement, Pope John Paul II discussed the moral foundations that must govern the shared lives of nations and peoples of the world, the cornerstones of which are freedom, human dignity, human and national rights, respect for others and solidarity. You, Sir, recalled the Pope's words on the United Nations as the moral centre of the world. In that same statement, he made an urgent appeal for a "qualitative leap in international life" (*A/50/PV.20, p. 5*).

That exceptional man — a spiritual guide whose life and acts were intertwined with the great turmoil of European and world history — left us just a few days ago. The European Union pays tribute to the unifying role played by the Supreme Pontiff and to his tireless commitment to humanist principles, democracy and human rights. Throughout his pontificate, John Paul II fought for peace, equality, solidarity, justice, dialogue among civilizations and religions. Brotherhood and reconciliation were at the heart of the message he sent to the peoples of the world.

Today, the European Union extends its sad condolences and salutes the memory of one who helped to reunite Eastern and Western Europe.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Poland.

Mr. Towpik (Poland): The passing away of His Holiness Pope John Paul II is a great loss to humanity. For the Holy See, it is the end of an exceptional pontificate. We in Poland are bidding farewell not only to a great man, a genuine humanist of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, but also to the greatest Pole in our nation's history and a trusted leader in a period of historic transition in my country.

Allow me to express my sincere gratitude for all the words of sympathy which have been addressed to Poland in recent days.

The United Nations and the present moment are a particularly appropriate time and place to pay tribute to Pope John Paul II. As you, Sir, reminded us early in the meeting, in 1995 John Paul II came to this place. He came to New York "to join men and women of every country, race, language and culture in celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations" (*A/50/PV.20, p. 3*). His words on that occasion were meant as a sign of interest in and esteem for this institution and echoed, as he said, the voices of all those who see in the United Nations the hope of a better future for human society.

Unfortunately, he will not come again as we prepare ourselves for the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations. He will not, as he did 10 years ago, contribute to our meditation on the history and the role of international institutions in the contemporary world. He will not be with us, but his words and his deeds should remain a great guide of our efforts to make this Organization better and more effective.

We should remember that he was a great proponent of peace, brotherhood and tolerance. He promoted reconciliation and understanding among peoples. He called for the observance of human rights and respect for the sovereignty of States and nations. He consistently struggled for justice and humankind's dignity and fundamental rights. He was a great believer in the unity of the world and the peaceful coexistence of nations. His words, which always had the strength to crumble walls of hatred and intolerance, should be kept in our memory forever.

Let his message of peace, hope and faith remain in us and contribute to building a better future for nations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Italy.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): Pope John Paul II made history. His passing is a huge loss for the international community and for Italy in particular. We admired him for the strength of his ideas, his courage, his passion, and his capacity to transmit values and hope to all of us, especially to our younger generations. He spread hope and trust, and he translated them into action.

We admired him for his extraordinary determination in pursuing dialogue and in building bridges among cultures, religions and ethnicities. He will be remembered as one of those men who showed us the path of liberty and justice and who pursued it with all his strength.

His life was dedicated to the advent of a world based on the values of peace, freedom, human dignity and social justice — values that are his legacy to the United Nations and to all of us. In fact, those values are enshrined in the United Nations Charter. He believed in them; he fought for them.

Pope John Paul II will be remembered among us as a man of peace, a man of justice, and a man of action.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on Archbishop Celestino Migliore, Permanent Observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Archbishop Migliore (Holy See): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, and the Deputy Secretary-General for opening this morning's session with a special tribute to the late Pope John Paul II. My delegation deeply appreciates your gesture and conveys to you the Holy See's acknowledgement and appreciation of the kind expression of your sympathy.

I would also like to express my thanks and appreciation to the Chairmen of the various groups and to the Permanent Representatives for their statements which cordially recalled and skilfully portrayed the many feats of a mighty man of peace.

At the four points of the compass, he transmitted fresh courage and hope to the oppressed, the poorest and the weakest throughout the world with a passion for freedom and solidarity, confronting the drawbacks in different political, economic and social systems. In this he was guided by respect for the dignity of the human being, made in the image of God. He strongly believed that it is only by keeping the transcendent in view that we can remain truly conscious of our place in creation.

During his first visit to United Nations Headquarters in New York in 1979, John Paul II said that the Holy See not only attached great importance to its collaboration with the United Nations but that, after the birth of the Organization, it had always expressed esteem and approval for the historic importance of this ultimate forum of international life and contemporary humanity.

He said in particular that he hoped that the United Nations, a forum of universal character, would not cease to be an effective place from which to evaluate, in truth and in justice, all the problems facing humanity.

At a time when efforts were being made to stand at a certain distance from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, John Paul II, throughout the 26 years of his pontificate, was one of its most ardent defenders.

As did his predecessors, John Paul II often expressed the hope that the United Nations and its agencies might become better adapted to their mission. There are many reforms that he felt would be desirable so as to make the bodies associated with the United Nations more efficient, so that they might better serve the societies, economies and cultures of the world.

Furthermore, the Pope dearly wished to see the United Nations develop effective procedures other than war to resolve international conflict. With regard to those that have troubled recent history, John Paul II always advocated the application of international law, placing the rule of law over the rule of force.

If the will to work for the common good in this way truly existed, the weakness of some international institutions would rapidly be transformed, ensuring greater peace and security for all, with the added bonus of large amounts of resources thus being made available for development technology adjunct to a wise security policy.

Let me finish, Mr. President, by reiterating to you my gratitude for your kind expressions of condolence and for those of the delegations that have been good enough to do likewise.

Agenda items 45 and 55 *(continued)*

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/2005)

The President (*spoke in French*): Members will recall that, at its 83rd plenary meeting, on 21 March 2005, the Secretary-General presented his report entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005).

Today, therefore, we shall begin our debate on the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all". Since the report was presented by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on 21 March, Member States will without a doubt have had time to consider it in greater depth and in particular had the opportunity to consider its various recommendations.

The large number of Member States already having placed their names on the list of speakers clearly demonstrates the interest attached to the report under consideration and, beyond that, to preparations for the high-level plenary meeting of September 2005.

I am also aware of the fact that this debate will be general in nature, given that we will be engaging in a more thorough and detailed consideration of the report during the thematic consultations by clusters of issues that will begin on Tuesday, 19 April 2005.

In that regard, I should like to inform the Assembly that, upon the request of the Group of 77 and China, consultations on cluster I issues will take place on 25 and 26 April 2005, instead of on 19 and 20 April 2005, as initially announced in my letter dated 24 March 2005. Accordingly, consultations on cluster III issues will be held on 19 and 20 April. This, then, is a simple inversion of the dates of the consultations on clusters I and III.

Moreover, given the importance of the issues before us, and desiring to make our consultations fully transparent, I have deemed it appropriate to consider the report of the Secretary-General in plenary so as to have an official record of our general consideration of the report.

Finally, as members are aware, the Secretary-General has appointed the following leaders as envoys to help him promote the ideas in his comprehensive report: Mr. Ernesto Zedillo, former President of Mexico; Mr. Joaquin Chissano, former President of Mozambique; Mr. Dermot Ahern, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland; and Mr. Ali Alatas, former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia. It gives me pleasure to welcome Mr. Ahern and Mr. Alatas, who are here in the General Assembly Hall; Mr. Zedillo and Mr. Chissano will be joining us in due course. I congratulate them all and wish them every success in their task.

Before calling on speakers in the debate, I wish to draw the attention of members to a brief questionnaire relating to the *Journal of the United Nations*, copies of which have been distributed to delegations. This survey is part of the Secretariat's effort to make a greater contribution to the work of the General Assembly. It would be appreciated if representatives would take a few minutes to fill out the questionnaire — now, if possible — and to leave it on their desks for collection. The Secretariat thanks delegations for their cooperation.

Mr. Hoscheit (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania, the candidate countries Turkey and Croatia and the countries of the stabilization and association process and potential candidates Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro align themselves with this statement.

Let me begin, Mr. President, by thanking you for having convened these consultations in the form of plenary meetings. In that way you have launched the second phase of the process of preparations for the 2005 summit, which you have thoroughly mapped out in your letter dated 24 March 2005 and with the supplementary information you have provided. You have outlined not merely a detailed calendar for weeks and months ahead, but also a very apt methodology for our substantive work on the many issues to be covered during preparations for the summit. There are many areas that Member States will need to tackle under your leadership. The way forward that you have charted will enable each of us to address all the important issues before us in an open, inclusive and transparent manner. After a month of Assembly debate, Sir, and with the assistance of your facilitators, you will have all the information you need to present us in early June with the first draft of an outcome document for the summit.

In the same vein, the European Union welcomes the Secretary-General's recent appointment of four envoys to help him promote his comprehensive agenda in preparation for the September summit.

On 21 March 2005 the Secretary-General submitted his comprehensive report entitled "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005), and today we are to discuss the report as a whole. At this point, I wish once again to thank the Secretary-General and his fine team for the

report, which will provide the stimulus for our debate in coming weeks.

At the European Council held on 22 and 23 March 2005, the 25 heads of State or Government of the States members of the European Union welcomed the Secretary-General's submission of the report, which makes a prime contribution to preparations for the September summit. The report rises to the level of the Secretary-General's ambition to offer proposals that are bold but achievable. The Secretary-General addresses the major issues among the international community's concerns. It is now for Member States to respond constructively to the challenge. As our heads of State or Government requested, the European Union will intensify its cooperation as we work towards ambitious, balanced results at the summit.

The European Union is grateful for the comprehensive and coherent nature of the report and of the proposed strategies in the areas of development, security and human rights, as well as for the related proposals on institutional reform. We share the view that "development, security and human rights go hand in hand" (*A/59/2005, para. 14*). International economic and social cooperation, the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion and protection of human rights are core missions of the United Nations. Here, we underscore the links among development, security, human rights, justice and the rule of law. Those key areas of United Nations activities are mutually reinforcing. The coherent nature of the Secretary-General's proposals reflects those links and the potential impact of concerted action in those areas in response to the threats and challenges that the international community must collectively face.

Recognizing that "no State, however powerful, can protect itself on its own [and that, l]ikewise, no country, weak or strong, can realize prosperity in a vacuum" (*Ibid., para. 24*), the Union feels confirmed in its strong resolve to promote and pursue the goal of effective multilateralism with the United Nations at its centre, as emphasized in the European Security Strategy, as the most effective response to the threats and challenges facing the international community.

The President's calendar of work gives us ample opportunity in coming weeks to comment in greater detail on the four clusters of issues in the Secretary-General's report. But our comments on the report in general would be incomplete if we failed to mention those four important chapters. We shall do so for each by discussing the horizontal aspects that the European Union regards as particularly significant. The Union will, of course, be making more detailed comments during the coming debate on these clusters.

On the chapter entitled "Freedom from want", the European Union supports the report's objectives in the area of development. We concur with the report's analysis of the links between security and development and believe that development is an important means of promoting peace and stability, but we want to reaffirm that role and the benefits of development constitute a pillar in their own right. Here, we are committed to sustainable development as a shared responsibility. We stress that environmental sustainability is key to meeting all the other Millennium Development Goals. It goes without saying that each country bears primary responsibility for its own development. Strengthening good governance; fighting corruption; putting in place the policies and investments required to drive growth led by the private sector; and maximizing domestic resources to fund national development strategies; those are important for creating optimal conditions for sustainable human development. We agree with the report's emphasis on a country's ownership of its own development through development strategies that are bold enough to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Such strategies should provide a framework for national action supported by the international community.

The European Union fully accepts a share of the common responsibility for development. We are strongly committed to the implementation of the provisions of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, and we underscore the link between meeting those objectives and reaffirming and implementing the outcomes of United Nations international conferences and summits in the economic, social, environmental and related fields, including those reflected in the Millennium Declaration and those emanating from the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women, the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

The European Union, at the level of heads of State or Government, has also acknowledged the special needs of Africa, a continent that is disproportionately affected by the threats and the challenges addressed in the Secretary-General's report. The European Union is determined to act to respond to those needs. It also recognizes the specific development needs existing in other parts of the world, in particular in middle-income countries, which the European Union will continue to address.

Allow me to recall that the European Union has consistently made significant efforts towards increasing official development assistance, as was recently demonstrated by the agreement to renew the European Union-African, Caribbean and Pacific States convention. In the spirit of the partnership established in Monterrey and reaffirmed in Johannesburg, the European Union foresees making a significant contribution in coming months in the area of financing for development. Internal discussions currently being held address matters such as setting more ambitious levels of official development assistance on the way towards the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income set by the General Assembly, access to innovative sources of financing, including the international financial facility and complementary sources, and debt relief. As well, the European Union is preparing to take decisions prior to the holding of the General Assembly's high-level dialogue on financing for development, to take place in New York at the end of June.

While making those efforts concerning the quantity of development aid, the European Union wishes to stress the need at the same time to improve the quality of official development assistance and donor practices. At the High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness recently held in Paris, the Union committed itself to improving the quality of its aid and to rationalizing its procedures. The European Union urges United Nations funds and programmes to take that path of harmonization. We call on all Member States in a position to do so to respect the internationally agreed levels of official development assistance in both quantitative and qualitative terms, and we recognize the efforts that have already been made in that regard.

An open and equitable trade system is a powerful engine of economic growth. We encourage the mobilization of international trade as a tool for development. Member States should commit themselves to working for a rapid and successful conclusion of the Doha development round in order to bring genuine benefits to the poorest.

In the spirit of truly sustainable development, the European Union expresses its satisfaction at the attention the Secretary-General's report gives to environmental issues, including questions concerning climate change and international regulation in the field of the environment.

The Union would like a number of issues of great importance and relevance for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals to be addressed in September and to be properly reflected in the summit's outcome document: issues such as the promotion of gender equality, recognition of the fact that the Millennium Development Goals cannot be attained without progress in implementing the Cairo goal of universal sexual and reproductive health rights, the importance of an intensified multisectoral response to HIV/AIDS and the links among the environment, security and poverty.

With respect to "Freedom from fear", given the interconnected nature of today's threats, the Union agrees that we must address the security concerns of all States. The European Union considers that the concept of security includes the dimensions of both State security and human security. Sovereignty comprises rights and responsibilities.

The Union recognizes the need to further develop and implement the comprehensive United Nations counter-terrorism strategy based on the outline recently presented by the Secretary-General in Madrid. For the European Union, agreement on a definition of terrorism and the conclusion of a comprehensive international convention on terrorism are key elements in that regard. Moreover, we would like to promote institutional development in the United Nations, in particular by strengthening the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and through capacity-building at the State level, with the assistance of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other relevant institutions. The European Union welcomes the recent conclusion of discussions towards the adoption of an international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism.

The European Union believes that arms control and disarmament efforts make an important

contribution to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We underscore the importance of promoting universal accession to and ratification of the relevant multilateral agreements and, where necessary, of strengthening their provisions, including by enforcing compliance. We welcome the Secretary-General's proposal with respect to small arms and light weapons, and we call for the adoption of a legal instrument on their marking and tracing, and for negotiations on a legal instrument regulating the brokering of such weapons.

In the fight against terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and transnational organized crime, the Union supports the call for wider accession to treaties, conventions, protocols and other international arrangements, for their wider implementation and for a strengthened role for the Security Council. Also important, the international community should pay tribute to the victims of terrorist attacks, hear their needs, as stated in the Secretary-General's recent proposal in Madrid, and take advantage of the contributions those individuals can make to the discussions and to the efforts to effectively combat the terrorist threat.

With respect to the use of force, the European Union welcomes the view that a series of principles agreed upon by the Security Council or suggested by the Secretary-General could contribute to the Council's debates on the use of force.

The Union calls for the strengthening of United Nations peacekeeping and crisis management capabilities, including through improved coordination in the field and at Headquarters, as well as between the field and Headquarters, and by strengthening cooperation with regional organizations and institutions. In that context, we thank the Secretary-General for his recognition of the European Union's ongoing efforts in that area.

The Union also underlines the importance of preventing conflicts and supports strengthening the Secretary-General's role in preventive diplomacy.

The Union supports the establishment of a peacebuilding commission, which would be one way to bridge the conceptual and institutional gap between the end of armed conflict and the resumption of development activities. In order to deal effectively with the problems that too often lead to the resumption of violence, such a commission needs a well-thought-out mandate. Questions about a peacebuilding commission's composition and its institutional context should be dealt with in the light of that mandate. We welcome the preliminary recommendations of the Secretary-General in that respect, in particular with regard to the mandate, and we await with interest his more detailed proposals.

Mr. Verbeke (Belgium), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The European Union welcomes the importance the Secretary-General's report attaches to human rights and the rule of law. Those two concepts are essential for living in dignity — an aspiration universally and legitimately shared by individuals and communities.

Human rights, civil and political rights and social, economic and cultural rights are a fundamental pillar of the United Nations system, and the United Nations has the mission of promoting and protecting those rights. The European Union therefore underlines the need to strengthen the human rights regime, in particular by integrating human rights in all activities of the United Nations system. That aim should guide all institutional reforms in the area of human rights. Valuable achievements of the existing system should be preserved.

The Union supports the call for strengthening the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. We encourage the High Commissioner to submit an action plan to that effect as soon as possible.

Within the broader context of human rights, the European Union wishes to underline the importance of the proposals to strengthen democracy. As we await details about the organization and the functioning of a democracy fund, we can endorse the principle underlying the proposal to create such a fund to extend assistance to countries seeking to strengthen their democracy.

Violations of human rights and the failure to respect the rule of law are among the main factors threatening peace and security and slowing down development processes. The European Union endorses the concept of the "responsibility to protect". Responsibility for security lies primarily with States, but it also falls to the international community when a State fails to protect its citizens. Flagrant human rights violations and acts of genocide call for a strong

response from and resolute action by the international community.

The European Union believes that the rule of law is a fundamental principle that lies at the core of the United Nations. In this regard, we would like to stress the importance of implementing the rule of law at both international and national levels, including through capacity-building, and we would also like to emphasize the need to strengthen the existing body of international norms and laws, in particular through accession to and implementation of international conventions and treaties.

Combating impunity and ensuring the proper administration of justice are vital aspects of the rule of law. The European Union would like to underscore its support for the International Criminal Court and other existing international or hybrid tribunals responsible for dealing with war crimes and calls upon Member States to cooperate with the Court and the tribunals. In the same spirit, we also believe that measures should be considered to strengthen the work of the International Court of Justice.

The European Union strongly supports the reform of the United Nations aimed at strengthening the international community's capacity to confront new threats and the broad spectrum of present-day challenges. Institutional reform is not an end in itself, but should flow from objectively assessed needs and our determination to make multilateralism more effective. Our common objective should be to enhance the credibility and the overall performance of the United Nations system.

In this regard, the Union would like to stress the importance of the report's proposals aimed at the revitalization of the General Assembly and the reform of the Economic and Social Council. The Union supports the adoption and the rapid implementation of a comprehensive and far-reaching package of reform proposals with a view to revitalizing the General Assembly. It welcomes the Secretary-General's proposal aimed at strengthening and refocusing the work of the Economic and Social Council. The ambitious development agenda will require bold action in the institutional context so as to render United Nations bodies — in particular the Economic and Social Council and the operational bodies — capable of dealing in a coherent manner with the economic, social and environmental challenges of the twenty-first century. We also acknowledge the need for Security Council reform.

Institutional reform in the field of human rights must make possible the strengthening of the United Nations human rights machinery as a whole. In this regard, we welcome the proposal reflecting the primacy of human rights through the creation of a human rights council. We would like once again to stress that human rights are inherently universal, and that all countries have a responsibility to promote and protect them. The establishment of such a body must take account of the valuable achievements already made in the field of human rights. Before expressing our final views with regard to that proposal, the European Union would appreciate further details from the Secretary-General with regard to, inter alia, the strengthening of legitimacy, responsibility, transparency and effectiveness.

The European Union also welcomes the Secretary-General's proposals aimed at improving the coherence of the structures to deal, at the international level, with increasing environmental challenges. It stresses the importance of strengthened coherence and greater cooperation at the regional and national levels, as well as between the United Nations and regional organizations. We support the Secretary-General's recommendations in that regard.

Furthermore, the European Union supports efforts to effect reform in the area of management, budget, finance, procurement and human resources, as proposed by the Secretary-General, with a view to promoting a more efficient, modern, transparent and responsible administration, focusing on today's challenges and avoiding duplication and overlap.

The coming weeks will provide further opportunities for us to elaborate on these clusters of issues in greater detail. The European Union will cooperate actively with you, Mr. President, as well as with the facilitators. The strong support expressed last month at the highest political level of the European Union bolsters our resolve to spare no effort over the weeks and months ahead in order to ensure an ambitious and balanced outcome for the summit in September.

Mr. De Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to associate myself with the statement made by the representative of Trinidad and Tobago conveying condolences, on behalf of the Latin

American and Caribbean Group, on the passing of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, who made a lasting impression on all of us through his diplomacy, which was marked by openness to all creeds and the championing of human rights.

I would also like to convey the condolences of the Andean Community to the delegation of the Principality of Monaco on the passing of Prince Rainier III.

I am speaking on behalf of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Peru — countries members of the Andean Community, which comprises 120 million people.

The Andean Community, which was created almost 36 years ago, represents the oldest and most institutionalized integration process in South America. It is the modern expression of an Andean identity based on geography, history and common interests, which are reflected in an agreed common foreign policy that constitutes the core of the Bolivarian integration of the South American community of nations.

The Andean countries — founding Members of the United Nations — have reviewed the report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005). We are in the process of analysing with great interest the proposals contained in that document, and we undertake to participate actively and collectively in any process of consultation and negotiation that serves to strengthen the United Nations and enhance its effectiveness and efficiency in promoting development and security for all and ensuring respect for international law.

I would like to take this opportunity to make some general observations; we will put forward specific suggestions during the forthcoming consultations and negotiations.

We agree that there is a need for a new concept of international collective security that will address new, as well as old, threats — above all, poverty and social exclusion, with which development, security, freedom and the protection of human rights are intimately connected.

My first point pertains to the suggestion that the proposals put forth by the Secretary-General are a package, which presupposes the idea of a single understanding. However, we cannot fail to point out that the heterogeneous nature of the issues addressed in the various chapters of the report means that each of them has a specific value that calls for separate consideration. As a result, our countries believe that the decisions to be taken during the review process of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and that of the reform of the United Nations should produce balanced results that accommodate the interests of all Member States.

Secondly, the Andean countries firmly support multilateralism, because it enhances and strengthens the collective and individual capacity of Member States to meet the needs of their peoples and fulfil the international obligations they have voluntarily entered into, thereby strengthening agreed international regimes.

We note with concern that the report of the Secretary-General devotes little attention to countries that, like those of the Andes, have through their efforts attained middle-income levels but continue to face high levels of poverty. If that situation is not adequately addressed, our countries may regress from those levels of income, which would make it very difficult to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. There is an urgent need to give proper attention to the serious problems facing middle-income countries, such as foreign debt and poverty, which is numerically higher than in many other States, as well as instability and recent economic crises. The approach to development and to reform of the United Nations system should give balanced and comprehensive attention to the situations of the various States and regions of the world.

It is our expectation that the review of the Millennium Declaration and the process of United Nations reform, including the system for the promotion of development, will help to overcome the existing inequity in the international trading system by eliminating subsidies and the tariff and para-tariff barriers imposed by developed countries that hinder us from strengthening our national productive capacities.

There is likewise a need to take resolute measures to counteract volatility in capital flows, the great external vulnerability of our countries and the high levels of foreign debt, as well as to achieve an international intellectual property regime that does not inhibit the transfer of technology or the participation of developing countries in world economic decision-

making. The Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization must be brought in line with the United Nations system and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in order to address the current social deficit caused by globalization, which is impeding job creation and generating instability.

All those issues are very important and should have a specific place as we address the eighth Millennium Development Goal, which aims at developing a global partnership for development. There should be a clear-cut commitment to special and differentiated treatment on trade issues; firmer measures in the areas of science, technology and innovation; an appropriate international solution to the foreign debt burden on our economies; and clear recognition of the need for new international financial mechanisms to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of countries' public policy and democracy.

The report of the Secretary-General recognizes that globalization has increased social inequality. There can be no political security unless the inequality caused by the current globalization is resolved. Similarly, the economic and social rights of peoples and their right to development will be undermined in practice, along with the enjoyment of political rights and democracy itself.

The eradication of poverty is extremely important to the countries of the Andean region, and is part of their national strategies. It is for that reason that our countries have been doing their utmost to contribute to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. However, we believe that a long-term development strategy must aim at creating wealth by promoting an international environment favourable to development. Thus, we see a certain bias in the Secretary-General's report with regard to assistance issues. We hope that future debates to review the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus will help us to strengthen the whole complement of the Secretary-General's proposals in the area of development, including the accountability of multinational corporations.

Lastly, I would like to say that Andean countries are resolutely convinced of the need to defend the basic rights, human dignity and worth of men and women while observing gender equality and strengthening democracy. As members of the South American community of nations, the Rio Group, the Group of 77 and the Non-Aligned Movement, and of course as the Andean Community, we will strive to ensure that the 2005 summit achieves the goal of creating conditions in which all countries can live in peace, security and prosperity.

Mr. Rastam (Malaysia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

First of all, I'd like to associate the Non-Aligned Movement with previous speakers in expressing heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the delegation of the Holy See and the followers of the Catholic Church over the passing away of Pope John Paul II on 3 April 2005. We concur with other speakers this morning that the passing of Pope John Paul II is a great loss to the international community.

The Non-Aligned Movement would also like to express its heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathy to the delegation of the Principality of Monaco over the passing away of His Serene Highness Prince Rainier on 6 April 2005.

At the outset, NAM expresses its sincere appreciation to you, Sir, for continuing this process of consultations with the States Members of the United Nations, in keeping with the roadmap that you have outlined for us. The member countries of NAM wish to go on record in also expressing their sincere appreciation to you for beginning consultations on the report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" two weeks upon its publication. NAM reiterates its pledge of full cooperation and support to you as you continue to lead us in the process of preparing for the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly in September 2005.

The Non-Aligned Movement supports the approach that you suggested in your letter dated 24 of March 2005 and the modification that you announced this morning. NAM remains committed to continuing to work actively, constructively and closely with you, in accordance with your plans, as well as with the facilitators whom you have appointed for the substantive phase of the preparatory process for the high-level plenary meeting. NAM welcomes your approach and commitment to ensuring that the preparatory process will remain inclusive, open-ended and transparent. We hope that this approach will be maintained until September under your skilful, wise

and able guidance. We look forward to your ideas on the negotiations that might ensue in this intergovernmental preparatory process.

The Non-Aligned Movement recalls operative paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 58/291 of 6 May 2004 and preambular paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 59/145 of 17 December 2004. Those have set out the objective of the High-level Plenary Meeting. We are all aware that a comprehensive review will be undertaken in September of the progress made in the fulfilment of all the commitments contained in the Millennium Declaration and of the progress made in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes and commitments of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields. The report of the Secretary-General is now before us in document A/59/2005. The report should provide an important input for the comprehensive review, together with other inputs, including from Member States.

The Non-Aligned Movement would like to thank and compliment the Secretary-General for discharging the mandate given to him in General Assembly resolution 58/291 to prepare the report and for presenting it to Member States in good time. The member countries of NAM are studying that important report with great interest, as well as a sense of common responsibility. The fact remains that we have only five months left to finalize the preparations on the outcome of the High-level Plenary Meeting. We believe that some of the recommendations made by the Secretary-General will require time and careful consideration before they can be implemented. Member States will no doubt take into consideration the Secretary-General's point about the need to act in September. NAM member countries will give their full cooperation towards achieving a successful outcome at the High-level Plenary Meeting.

The Non-Aligned Movement has taken note of the assessment made by the Secretary-General in his report that "new circumstances demand that we revitalize consensus on key challenges and priorities and convert that consensus into collective action" (*A/59/2005, para. 7*). However, NAM maintains its position that the questions of development and social advancement should remain the centrepiece of the deliberations at the United Nations. In that context, NAM stresses that the outcome of the High-level Plenary Meeting should provide a proper balance on all questions, in particular the balance between questions relating to development and social advancement and the questions relating to peace and security, bearing fully in mind the mandate as adopted in General Assembly resolutions 55/291 and 59/145, as well as the need to review the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Secretary-General has in his report raised important questions and made many valuable and interesting observations and recommendations which would have far-reaching implications and ramifications. The Secretary-General, in presenting his report to the General Assembly on 21 March 2005, expressed his hope that, inter alia, the proposals contained therein would be adopted as a single package by Member States. In his view, an approach to treating them as an à-la-carte menu and selecting those that Member States especially fancy will not work. The Secretary-General further mentioned that his proposals amount to a comprehensive strategy by giving equal weight and attention to the three principles of the Organization — development, security and human rights — that must be underpinned by the rule of law.

NAM has duly taken note of those comments by the Secretary-General. We welcome the subsequent clarification by the Deputy Secretary-General in briefings to regional groupings on the interconnectedness of the issues raised by the Secretary-General in his report and that a "single package" did not imply a take-it-or-leave-it proposition. NAM believes that it would be up to Member States to respond to the Secretary-General's report and the recommendations contained therein with a view to achieving a balanced outcome. NAM also believes that it will be necessary to assess each recommendation according to its merit.

The Non-Aligned Movement recalls the statements delivered by the Movement at the informal meetings of the plenary of the General Assembly on 27 January and 22 February 2005. NAM affirms the continued validity of the comments and pronouncements concerning a number of key questions raised in the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change that were made through those statements. NAM further affirms the continued relevance of the document containing important ideas and observations of NAM on the report of the High-Level Panel that was submitted to you, Sir, and the Secretary-General on 28 February 2005. This present

statement must be read in conjunction with those earlier statements and documents which I have just mentioned.

The Non-Aligned Movement has noted that a number of observations and recommendations made by the High-level Panel and the Millennium Project have been incorporated by the Secretary-General into his report. However, the report does not reflect to any significant extent the comments and views of the membership of this Organization, including NAM, on the reports of the High-level Panel and the Millennium Project, despite the rich and stimulating debate during the informal meetings of the plenary of the General Assembly in January and February 2005, which you, Sir, have very ably summarized and presented to the Secretary-General. The member countries of NAM, which represent almost two thirds of the membership of this Organization, have noted that generally the ideas and observations submitted by NAM have not been taken into consideration in the Secretary-General's report.

The President returned to the Chair.

The Non-Aligned Movement fully understands that in preparing his report, the Secretary-General has drawn upon his eight years' experience as Secretary-General, on his own conscience and convictions, and on his understanding of the Charter of the United Nations. The Secretary-General has also said that the report has been inspired by the reports of the High-level Panel and the Millennium Project.

In that connection, the Non-Aligned Movement would like to reserve the right to table its position and comments on the questions raised by the Secretary-General. NAM intends to do so during the consideration of these questions under the four clusters that have been suggested in the coming weeks and as we proceed towards the event in September. NAM also intends to submit detailed comments under these four clusters in due course. NAM, like others, is not in a position today to present an in-depth response to proposals in the report of the Secretary-General.

We believe that at this stage of the preparatory process it is important that we continue to identify issues on which Member States think they can find common ground. We believe that we should do so by, inter alia, striving to maintain the consensus achieved earlier, not least at the Millennium Summit five years ago, by maintaining the inviolability of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the principles of international law, upholding the Millennium Declaration and abiding by the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, which should serve as important underpinnings.

The Non-Aligned Movement is prepared to share with other delegations its position, comments and ideas concerning what we envisage should be the outcome of the high-level plenary meeting. We are prepared to engage our partners and interlocutors in dialogue and discussion to further enrich our understanding of the questions at hand with a view to achieving a positive and constructive outcome.

Indeed, we agree with the President that United Nations Member States shoulder a heavy and collective responsibility to ensure a genuinely meaningful and successful outcome of the high-level plenary meeting. Rest assured that NAM will play its part in this connection. We want to be as constructive as possible, bearing in mind our commitment to the purposes and principles embodied in the Charter and our interests, concerns and priorities based on our adherence to the fundamental principles, purposes and goals of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Non-Aligned Movement considers that the remaining five months leading up to the high-level plenary meeting will be critical for all Member States of this Organization. We envisage that our leaders will be taking bold decisions on fundamental questions confronting the United Nations and the international community. Those decisions could have wide-ranging and far-reaching implications in many aspects, in particular in the way we conduct affairs here at the United Nations and in the relations among States. In this connection, NAM emphasizes that any new measures concerning the United Nations and its reform should be decided by the Member States themselves.

Finally, we must recognize that reform of the United Nations is an ongoing process and that the Member States are the major stakeholders in this endeavour. While we should aim for our leaders to be able to make major decisions collectively in September, we have to expect that the process of transforming the United Nations into an organization able to meet the threats and challenges of the twenty-first century will continue thereafter.

Mr. Neil (Jamaica): On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I take this opportunity to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this plenary meeting of the General Assembly and to congratulate you in general for your efforts to ensure that we prepare effectively for a successful high-level plenary meeting of the sixtieth session.

The Group of 77 and China also wishes to thank the Secretary-General for the timely submission of his report, thus discharging the mandate given to him in General Assembly resolution 58/291 to prepare a comprehensive report as a basis for the consultations leading up to the high-level plenary meeting in September.

The Secretary-General has given us his analysis of the current global situation and has made a number of recommendations for our consideration. He has emphasized that 2005 presents an historic opportunity to address the challenges of a changing world. If this is so and if the political conditions are favourable, then we should seize that opportunity. The developing countries will be ready to do so, but it must be understood that the recommendations that we support and the decisions we take will be geared to strengthening multilateralism and to upholding the principles of international law and policies that promote equity and protect the rights and interests of all States. We should seek to have, at the end of the day, a stronger United Nations, with improved institutional arrangements and the political orientation to deliver programmes and policies to advance the welfare of nations around the world, in all its constituent parts, without the application of selective and discriminatory criteria.

With these objectives in mind, we are studying the recommendations of the Secretary-General. There are differing perceptions of the orientation and philosophical approach taken in the report and the relative emphasis with respect to development issues, security concerns and human rights. For the time being, we will limit our comments to general issues of concern, which we intend to address more substantively at a later date.

In paragraph 4 of his report the Secretary-General informs us that in its preparation he drew on his eight years of experience as Secretary-General and on his conscience and convictions. He also drew inspiration from the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change as well as the Millennium Project report. What is missing is a reference to the views and proposals of Member States expressed in the discussions in the General Assembly over the past three months. It would have been reassuring if there were an indication that these were taken into account.

At this stage, the G-77 and China will only make general comments on the report and its overall approach to development issues. We are looking first of all at the overall balance and areas of emphasis in the analysis and recommendations. We do so recalling that paragraph 2 of resolution 58/291 requires the high-level plenary to

> "undertake a comprehensive review of the progress made in the fulfilment of the commitments contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, including the internationally agreed development goals and the global partnership required for their achievement, and of the progress made in the integrated and coordinated implementation, at the national, regional and international levels, of the outcomes and commitments of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields".

I have quoted from the resolution so that we focus our minds on the priorities that have been set and the expectations to be fulfilled at the high-level plenary. The Secretary-General rightly emphasizes the interrelatedness of current challenges and threats. This only confirms and reinforces the fundamental importance of what is the foremost challenge facing the global community: reversing the widening gap between rich and poor and reducing the appalling and unacceptable levels of poverty, hunger and infectious disease, which are taking a heavy toll on human life in the developing world.

On the basis of the conclusions drawn from the Millennium Project report, the Secretary-General clearly recognizes the urgency, the scale and the dimensions of the problem. His recommendations contained in section II of the report are steps in the right direction; they are useful and merit serious consideration. Our main concern is that they do not go far enough. If there is to be real change, we need more concrete, action-oriented measures that will enable us to adequately address the development agenda. Bolder and more far-reaching decisions can and should be

taken by our leaders. We look principally to three areas.

First, resources must be mobilized. The Millennium Project report has calculated current and future needs, and the real question is not how to gain new commitments, but rather how to ensure the implementation of those already made in relation to official development assistance and debt relief, and how to improve mechanisms for the transfer of resources.

Our leaders should not be content to issue another series of exhortations; it is time for concrete measures for implementation. The undertakings set out in the Rio Declaration, the conventions on climate change, biological diversity and desertification, Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Kyoto Protocol; the commitments undertaken at the Beijing, Copenhagen, Cairo, Istanbul and Monterrey conferences and in the Brussels, Almaty and Mauritius programmes, in favour of the least developed countries, the landlocked developing countries and the small island developing States, respectively; and the special commitment to Africa: all are of critical importance.

Secondly, the Secretary-General's report does not adequately cover the broad range of systemic economic issues and policies beyond the narrow framework of the Millennium Development Goals. The major constraints on development flowing from existing global policies in trade, finance and technology need to be removed in favour of policies that promote development. It is also imperative to move away from the policy conditionalities that restrict developing countries' policy options and to remove coercive measures that are unilaterally applied against developing countries.

Thirdly, change is needed with respect to international economic governance. The Secretary-General is moving in the right direction with respect to measures aimed at strengthening the role of the Economic and Social Council, which should lead to the creation of a better balance in the overall functioning of the various organs of the United Nations. However, we also need bolder action on a wider front, extending to those institutions that direct policies relating to trade, money and finance and technology. The time has come for steps to be taken aimed at reforms that will open the way for developing countries to exercise greater influence on the formulation of policies affecting global economic relations. More inclusive decision-making arrangements are needed to facilitate a more sensitive and more responsive approach to development needs, especially among the Bretton Woods institutions.

Those are the broad outlines of our position, which we will expand upon when we discuss in greater detail the elements in cluster I on development issues. We can use the Secretary-General's recommendations as a foundation upon which to build, using other inputs and reports to make more substantive recommendations for our heads of State or Government to consider. As the Secretary-General has emphasized, this opportunity should not be lost.

Mr. Elisaia (Samoa): I take the floor today to speak on behalf of the 13 members of the Pacific Islands Forum group: Australia, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country, Samoa.

The Pacific Islands Forum group welcomes the Secretary-General's report entitled "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005) as a timely challenge to Member States to take bold and decisive steps in 2005 to confront the deeply interrelated and interconnected global challenges of development, security and human rights. The report is recommended as an integrated package of early achievable goals among the primary yet complementary global challenges facing the United Nations. The Secretary-General emphasizes the complementarity of those issues in the report by giving equal weight and attention to all three challenges.

Although we have been assured that a narrow focus on any one challenge or an attempted prioritization of the three challenges could be counterproductive, the reality of the world in which we live — of the regions we inhabit and call home — makes it intrinsically unavoidable that States and groups of States will continue to view the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report — or in any report, for that matter — primarily in terms of the immediate impact, positive or negative, that those recommendations will have on those States and groups of States. That will continue to be the litmus test applied to any proposal, no matter how well-intentioned it might be.

We thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to express our views on the Secretary-General's report. In order to be productive, we will be making only general comments during this meeting. We will articulate our views more persuasively, we hope, during the focused discussions of individual clusters to be held in the coming weeks.

The Pacific Islands Forum represents a happy and functional family of developed, developing and least developed countries that have partnered successfully over the years to address the varied challenges of development, security and human rights, as identified in the report. All but two of our group's members are small island developing States. The special circumstances of the majority of our members, and their particular vulnerability to environmental, economic and social shocks, are well known to all and well documented by the United Nations. Our group believes that development is a central issue on the United Nations agenda and that it is the basic foundation on which peace, security and human rights can be achieved. Peace, freedom and human dignity are greatly enhanced as tangible results when more people enjoy the benefits of prosperity.

The report is energetically bold and innovative in some of its recommendations on security, development and human rights issues and in placing them squarely at the centre of the global agenda. However, the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action — which only a few months ago was overwhelmingly endorsed by the international community as a practical blueprint for addressing the sustainable development needs of small island developing States — rates not a single mention in the report. That is unfortunate, given that the Mauritius Strategy means so much to small island developing States, their Governments and their peoples. We hope that all is not lost. With your support, Mr. President, and that of the United Nations community, we trust that that oversight can be rectified during the ongoing consultation process that you so ably initiated. We must work to ensure that the high-level meetings to be held in September produce a win-win situation for all stakeholders of the Organization, including our Pacific region.

The Pacific Islands Forum group in New York therefore asks that two additional elements be added to the summit outcome. First, the summit should acknowledge and reaffirm the Mauritius Strategy as the comprehensive strategy of the small island developing States aimed at meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

Secondly, it asks that the summit outcome acknowledge the special needs of small island developing States. The Millennium Declaration referred to the special needs of such States. The 2002 Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Programme of Action both referred to the special case of small island developing States. There are 43 small island developing States, and we ask that their needs not be forgotten in 2005.

We support the call for an enhanced role for the Economic and Social Council as the principal body tasked with ensuring stronger systemwide coherence of the various development and humanitarian agencies, while at the same time avoiding duplication in the system.

On the issue of United Nations reform, we agree that such reform is now overdue. The General Assembly should reclaim its stature as the highest deliberative decision-making and representative body, which the framers of the United Nations Charter had intended it to be. In our view, to focus on the practical challenges suggested by the Secretary-General as initial first steps to breathe new life into the General Assembly would be a pragmatic and realistic way to start the reform process.

Similarly, we support the recommendation for an enlarged Security Council. The need to act decisively on this issue cannot be overemphasized. We must capitalize on the current momentum and enthusiasm and act in tandem with what appears to be an environment of tolerance for change on the horizon.

On a personal note, let me say that one of the truly positive outcomes of the High-level Panel's report on Security Council reform was the proposal for an Asia and Pacific grouping. Naturally, our members were hoping that the Secretary-General would endorse that proposal. Much to our regret, the report is silent on the proposed Asia and Pacific constituency. We hope, however, that in time the Panel's proposal will take root and will bode well for the Pacific in the years ahead in a reformed and reinvigorated United Nations.

The proposal for the creation of a Human Rights Council is a bold proposition. The Secretary-General has certainly made a strong case for it. We would

caution, however, against making any rash decisions. Let us move cautiously and evaluate the proposal in its entirety. We should implement it only once we are convinced beyond the shadow of a doubt that the end product will serve the interests of all 191 Member States justly, equally and effectively.

On Secretariat reform, we support the proposal to align the structure of the Secretariat to reflect current realities and to allow it better to respond to the priorities and the global agenda of the United Nations to be agreed by the leaders at the September high-level session. The Secretary-General should be given the resources and the necessary leverage to implement this critical dimension of the overall reform.

The Secretary-General's own wish to give greater support to regional organizations and to engage them in more meaningful and cooperative ways is one we would particularly like to encourage, given that, in some cases, the regional organizations provide the physical interface between the United Nations and some of the Member States. Roles should, however, be demarcated clearly to ensure complementarity of purpose and support, without any undue influence or encroachment on each other's mandates or spheres of competency.

We thank you again, Mr. President, for the opportunity to present our views. We firmly believe that the summit in September will be a momentous occasion for the international community to come together to act in unity and good faith for the future of humankind. That would be an enduring and memorable gift to our people on the occasion of the sixtieth birthday of the United Nations gift.

Mrs. Inteimann (Estonia): In my capacity as Chairperson of the Eastern European Group, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the member States of said Group eligible for non-permanent membership in the Security Council.

I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for having convening this plenary meeting of the General Assembly to discuss the report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom" under your presidency. We are committed to taking an active part in this decisive stage of consultations and preparations in the lead-up to the summit to be held in September 2005.

Mr. President, we join other delegations in expressing our appre iation to you for your continuous contribution to our reform efforts and to preparations for the summit. We are looking forward to a significant outcome at the summit in September.

We reaffirm our support to the Secretary-General and to his role and leadership in promoting reform.

We would like to address an issue of importance to us, namely reform of the Security Council. In his report, the Secretary-General urges Member States to consider the two options — models A and B — or any other viable proposals, and to take a decision on this issue. In that context, we would like to refer to the letter of the States members of the Group of Eastern European States eligible for non-permanent membership in the Security Council in response to the recommendations of the High-level Panel.

The member States of the Group of Eastern European States eligible for non-permanent membership in the Security Council wish to re-emphasize that the two models for the enlargement of the Security Council, as presented by the High-level Panel's report and mentioned in the Secretary-General's report, do not meet their expectations.

In that regard, those member States of the Group would like to stress further that existing regional groups should be maintained.

Those Member States reiterate their view, stated in the joint position paper issued in May 1998, that any increase in the non-permanent membership of the Security Council should ensure an enhanced representation of the Eastern European Group by the allocation to said Group of at least one additional non-permanent seat in an enlarged Security Council. Those Member States wish to recall the fact that, since 1991, the membership of the Group has more than doubled.

Those members of the Group highly appreciate the Secretary-General's recommendation to all Members of the United Nations to make the Security Council more broadly representative of the international community as a whole and more effective. Therefore, we are confident that the legitimate interests of the Eastern European Group will be fully taken into account in this crucial process.

I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

The Ambassador of Luxembourg has spoken on behalf of the European Union. As a member State of the European Union, Estonia fully shares the views contained in his statement.

I would therefore like to highlight some points of special relevance to my Government in the process of United Nations reform.

First, Estonia views the Secretary-General's report as a very important milestone in the reform process undertaken by the membership of the United Nations. We feel that we should maintain a comprehensive approach to reform, as suggested by the Secretary-General.

Reform of institutions alone does not yield greater results. It does not make the Organization more meaningful. We should forge in parallel our common understanding of the value of the United Nations at the beginning of the twenty-first century. That is why Estonia hopes that we will be able to achieve substantive progress in all clusters of reform. Progress in all clusters is imperative to maintain the credibility and the relevance of the Organization.

Secondly, the European Union's statement has a strong focus on development issues. As a new donor, Estonia shares the commitment of the developed world towards developing countries. We would especially underline the importance of continued and concerted efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS in all parts of the world. We should fight against that pandemic together: Member States with the assistance of the United Nations system.

Thirdly, Member States can use the forum of the United Nations to formulate a comprehensive package of norms and commitments to guide us in the fight against terrorism. We should use the moral authority of the United Nations — and its strength — in condemning terrorism.

Finally, reform of human rights monitoring mechanisms and structures is of the utmost importance. Here too, we hope that we can change structures, but also attitudes and working methods, so that all Members can be subjected to the same standards and criteria. We think the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights needs to be strengthened. The High Commissioner should gain greater visibility throughout the United Nations system. We are looking forward to a detailed discussion of issues relating to human rights, especially the proposal to establish a council on human rights. What we need is the ability to react swiftly to events in the world, flexibility of agenda and substantive discussion. We need implementation of commitments. We would also like to see a clearer division of labour among the various human rights bodies. Whereas some duplication may be healthy, we must be aware of the resource implications of each and every duplication in a system as big as the United Nations.

In conclusion, let me express my Government's continued commitment to reform and its hope for a successful summit in September.

Mr. Chimphamba (Malawi): In my capacity as Chairman of the Group of African States for the month of April, I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for the manner in which you are conducting the process of informal consultations on the report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005).

We thank the Secretary-General for presenting his report. We also thank you, Sir, as President of the General Assembly, because following the release of the report you kindly met with the African Group and presented a road map as a way forward, as you continued with your consultations in an active, inclusive and transparent manner.

The African Group is pleased at this time to make what will be only preliminary general remarks, using the Secretary-General's report as a basis and bearing in mind that further consultations and debates are to follow between now and the September summit.

Africa strongly favours reform of the United Nations with the objective of strengthening the international community's capacity to face the broad spectrum of both persistent and present-day challenges. The final objectives should be to enhance and strengthen the overall performance of the United Nations system in order to enable it to deliver effectively; to enhance multilateralism; to strengthen the rule of law in international relations; and to preserve the basic principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

The African Group stresses that the primary focus of the high-level event will be to review the implementation of the content of the Millennium

Declaration, including the Millennium Development Goals. In that regard, the African Group wishes to point out that the Millennium Declaration emphasized the special needs of Africa. The African Group notes that, while the Secretary-General's report has interpreted some of the recommendations contained in the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (A/59/565) and in the report of the Millennium Project, sadly, some of the proposals and recommendations of the Millennium Project report and views of Member States as expressed during the informal consultations held by the President of the General Assembly on both reports were not integrated into the report.

The African Group further notes that, while African States have made notable progress in overcoming poverty — and despite the international community's commitment in the Millennium Declaration to address the special needs of Africa and to address the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development, debt cancellation, improved market access, enhanced official development assistance, increased flows of financial development investment, transfer of technology and the fight against HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases — Africa remains at the centre of the crisis. That lack of progress in Africa was underlined by the High-level Panel. However, the report of the Secretary-General does not clearly indicate reliable means of implementation. In that context, the African Group feels that there is a need for a clear stipulation of commitments and for appropriate means of implementation if the recommendations are to be considered to be an acceptable package. The African Group wishes to highlight the imbalance between the efforts of African States to fight poverty and the insufficient commitment by the international community to support such efforts.

On the subject of development issues, the African Group is of the view that the report did not sufficiently stress the critical linkage between development and poverty as a root cause of insecurity. Indeed, a focus on poverty alleviation is the most effective tool for conflict prevention. It is therefore important that a balance be maintained between the consideration of security issues and the consideration of development issues at all levels.

The African Group welcomes the innovative idea of a timetable for fulfilling the commitment to allocate 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product for official development assistance, within the larger framework of the Millennium Declaration's focus on Africa's special needs.

On the subject of debt, the United Nations is requested to support the efforts currently being made by the Commission of the African Union for a thorough review of debt, leading to debt cancellation for the heavily indebted poor countries and to debt reduction or cancellation for middle-income indebted countries.

The African Union has adopted the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as the programme for the socio-economic development of the continent. We hope that the September summit will provide another opportunity for the international community to commit itself to increased support for NEPAD.

The African Group is pleased that the Secretary-General's report reflects the importance of the issues of gender equity and access to health services and programmes, including sexual reproductive services, both as a critical need for women's empowerment and as a component of strong public health systems. We note that reproductive health issues are identified in two of the seven clusters proposed by the Secretary-General as a package for countries' 10-year development plans to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

In that connection, we support the recommendation set out in the annex to the report on ensuring access to reproductive health services and stress the need for world leaders to reiterate in September the crucial importance of ensuring access to reproductive health services by 2015, improving the appalling state of maternal health, reversing the increasing spread of HIV/AIDS and bringing about women's empowerment.

On HIV/AIDS, we are convinced that the balanced strategy of prevention and treatment proposed by the Secretary-General requires sustained investment in reproductive health commodities, including affordable access for those people afflicted by the disease, as an essential complement to the "quick wins" initiative. The importance of quick-wins initiatives acknowledged, however, the African Group wishes to stress that they must be based on the long-term development of Africa. Moreover, the selection of the criteria for choosing countries for the

implementation of quick wins should be transparent, objective and based on the commitments of the heads of State and Government set out in the Millennium Declaration, bearing in mind the limitations of private-led development in countries without basic infrastructure and the role of the Government and its partners in the provision of public infrastructure. Furthermore, the African Group cautions against new conditionalities and parameters to define governance.

The African Group stresses that environmental protection will be difficult to achieve without concrete steps to address poverty. It is noted that the report fails to call on developed countries that have not yet done so to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. Moreover, desertification, deforestation and biodiversity are critical issues for African countries, and they need to be addressed in a more elaborate manner. It is also vital to stress the importance of comprehensively addressing the issue of migration and in that regard to emphasize the need to urge Member States to sign and ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, which went into force in 2003.

The International Financial Facility outlined in the report requires further deliberation. In addition, the World Solidarity Fund, which was established by the General Assembly, constitutes an important mechanism for the mobilization of additional resources for development.

On security issues, the African Group would like to stress the need to address all perceptions of threats and challenges, with the objective of achieving collective security agreed by all. The African Group wishes to point out that the Secretary-General's report has introduced some new nuances and concepts that need further reflection and elaboration.

On the subject of terrorism, it is important for all Member States to sign, ratify or accede to the various international and regional instruments relating to the prevention and combating of terrorism. It is also important that Member States enhance their cooperation in preventing and combating terrorism and scrupulously implement continental and international instruments. In line with the Algiers Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, terrorism cannot be justified under any circumstances. Political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other motives cannot be a justifiable defence for a terrorist act. However, there is a difference between terrorism and legitimate struggle waged by people for their liberation or self-determination in accordance with the principles of international law.

With regard to the use of force, the African Group supports the recommendation in the report of the Secretary-General that the African Union be supported in establishing the African standby force.

On human rights issues, the African Group wishes to stress Africa's commitment to human rights. However, it is important to point out the difficulty of defining collective security solely in terms of the responsibility to protect. The protection of citizens should not be used as a pretext to undermine the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States. In addition to the civil and political rights included in the Secretary-General's report, human rights need to include social and economic rights, particularly the rights to development and to determine systems of governance.

On institutional reforms, the African Group acknowledges the important roles that the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council can play in this building. It is important for us to accord the required focus to the revitalization and strengthening of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The African Group also wishes to point out that Africa's goal is to be fully represented in all the decision-making bodies of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, which is the principal decision-making body of the Organization in matters relating to international peace and security. Africa's full representation in the Security Council means, first, not less than two permanent seats, with all the prerogatives and privileges of permanent membership, including the right of veto, and, secondly, five non-permanent seats. As to the Secretariat, the African Group looks forward to being provided with detailed clarification as to the proposals that the Secretary-General has highlighted in his report as a means of strengthening the Secretariat.

Mr. Wang Guangya (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): On 21 March, Secretary-General Kofi Annan formally submitted to the General Assembly a comprehensive report that has attracted wide attention and commentary. The President has today launched a round of discussions on that report, marking the start of the substantive phase in the preparations for the September

summit. China stands ready to continue close consultations with all countries with a view to advancing those preparations.

As stated in the Secretary-General's report, this year represents a unique opportunity for the United Nations. The September summit is to take important decisions bearing on the future orientation and role of the United Nations. Successful completion of the preparations for the summit is a challenging task for all of us. For that purpose, the Secretary-General's report has set forth a number of proposals marked by unique insight and boldness. We believe that the report is well intentioned and nobly inspired, and that it contains many practical proposals. We appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General in that regard. China is making a comprehensive and in-depth study of the report. For the moment, I wish only to make some preliminary observations.

The United Nations was born 60 years ago out of the ashes of a devastating war. On the one hand, the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter have retained their vitality and strong relevance to this day. Adherence to them should therefore underpin and orient the preparations for the September summit. On the other hand, the dramatic changes in the international situation have meant that only by undertaking the necessary reforms can the United Nations maintain its vitality and play a greater role in international affairs.

Accelerating the pace of United Nations reform and establishing a renewed and highly efficient mechanism are common goals shared by all countries. It requires on our part a strong sense of urgency. Business as usual and standing pat will not help to improve the United Nations credibility or ability. Meanwhile, we must not lose sight of the fact that United Nations reform needs to be all-round and multisectoral. It cannot be accomplished overnight or in one go and one must not expect any permanent fix. Reform can only be a gradual process, with a variety of national perspectives and dissimilar interests at play. It is therefore only natural for divergences of views and controversy to arise. Given that reality, we need to come to agreement on some basic principles for proceeding with the reform, which we believe could include the following.

First, regardless of their size, wealth or might, all countries have the right to take full part on an equal footing in the discussion of all United Nations reform-related issues. Secondly, reform should accommodate to the maximum extent the views and concerns of all United Nations Members, especially the developing countries. Thirdly, reform should tackle the more manageable issues first and proceed gradually from there to the thornier ones. On questions where division persists, caution is called for. If consensus is not immediately reachable on those questions, consultations should continue. The temptation to force a decision at the summit must be resisted. Fourthly, the focus of reform should be to effectively reverse the trend of giving priority to security over development that has long characterized United Nations activities. The United Nations should increase resource input into development issues and effectively implement the Millennium Development Goals.

Narrowing the gulf between rich and poor and achieving development for all constitutes an extremely important strategic mission for both North and South. They are central topics that require priority attention at the September summit. The Secretary-General's report stresses the urgency of achieving the Millennium Development Goals, which are still achievable but only if we break with business as usual and dramatically accelerate and scale up action now. The report contains a number of practical recommendations, including recognizing the special needs of Africa and reaffirming solemn commitments made to address those needs; urging developed countries to establish timetables to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance by no later than 2015; the setting-up of international financing mechanisms; and the early completion of multilateral trade negotiations, with full commitment to realizing its development focus and more debt reduction for countries of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative. We welcome those proposals and look forward to fleshing them out further as discussions progress.

The report also contains sound recommendations on strengthening basic health systems, enhancing the overall international response to major infectious disease, and the establishment of a worldwide early warning system for all natural hazards. The General Assembly adopted by consensus two resolutions on enhancing capacity-building in global public health at its fifty-eighth and fifty-ninth sessions, attesting to a solid consensus in the international community on the

issue. The General Assembly should build on that momentum to take follow-up action.

We support the Secretary-General's proposition concerning collective action against security threats and challenges. It coincides with China's proposal for a new security concept that emphasizes mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation. The proposals in the report on a strategy against terrorism, peacekeeping and the fight against transnational organized crime are on the whole sound and positive. Meanwhile, we take note that recent consultations in the General Assembly have shown that differences remain on the issues of the definition of terrorism, the criteria for the use of force, the concept of the responsibility to protect and the prevention of proliferation. We believe further consultations are needed to seek consensus on those questions.

The Secretary-General's report contains a range of proposals for the reform of the United Nations institutional machinery. We favour the adoption of a comprehensive package of reforms to revitalize the General Assembly and support the reform proposals concerning the strengthening of the role of the Economic and Social Council. The question of establishing mechanisms enabling the General Assembly to engage fully and systematically with civil society needs, in our view, further in-depth study.

China favours and supports the reform of the existing human rights machinery of the United Nations. The key to such reform is to change the current practice of politicizing human rights issues, reduce confrontation and promote cooperation so that more resources can be devoted to technical cooperation projects aimed at national capacity-building in the area of human rights. Whether or not the replacement of the Commission on Human Rights with a smaller standing human rights council will overcome the serious "credibility deficit" characterizing international human rights work is a topic that needs further earnest exploration. China is favourably disposed towards the proposal for the establishment of a peacebuilding commission and believes that its main responsibility should be to help devise plans for the transition from conflict to post-conflict peacebuilding and to coordinate initiatives of the international community in that respect. We look forward to more specific recommendations from the Secretary-General on the commission's functions and mandate. China has serious reservations about abolishing the Military Staff Committee.

Security Council reform is now a focus of universal attention. I wish to take this opportunity to further elaborate on China's position on the question.

First, China supports reform of the Security Council, with priority being given to increasing the representation of the developing countries in the Council.

Secondly, the Security Council is a body entrusted with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. As the expansion of the Council involves the vital interests of all concerned, controversy surrounding the issue is therefore to be expected. What is essential is that full account be taken of the interests and concerns of all regional groups and each country and that the process be characterized by democratic, in-depth discussions, patient consultations, and a deliberate, orderly procedure. Only a blueprint resulting from consensus can truly help strengthen the Security Council's authority and effectiveness and win broad trust and support from the general membership.

Thirdly, China is open to all proposals for increasing Council membership as long as they are conducive to overcoming divergence and maintaining unity among the Member States. In previous consultations in the General Assembly, the two options proposed by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change were discussed and major differences persist. China believes that, those two options being what they are — namely, ideas for consideration — there is no reason why discussions of Council reform should be confined to the two models put forth by the Panel. It is important to tap the collective wisdom of all and to treat all reform proposals and ideas with equal seriousness.

Fourthly, in the long-term interest of the United Nations as a whole, China is not in favour of setting an artificial time limit for Council reform and still less of forcing through any immature proposals lacking consensus in the form of a vote.

Fifthly, Security Council reform is only one part of the reform process of the United Nations and should not be allowed to eclipse equally important reform in other areas. We do not wish to see debate and controversy surrounding Council reform marginalize or

even jeopardize consultations on other issues, particularly those concerning development. We should especially guard against the possibility of such controversy causing a major rift among United Nations members, with the unfortunate consequence of compromising the drafting and consideration of the final document of the forthcoming Summit.

China will continue to participate actively in the Summit preparations that you, Mr. President, are guiding. We are confident that under your able leadership, and through the tireless efforts of the facilitators, the substantive phase of preparations for the summit will proceed smoothly, in an open, inclusive and transparent manner.

The outcome document could be based on the proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report, but there should be wide consultations with all interested parties, taking on board other useful proposals and ideas so as to reflect all concerns, in particular reasonable requests on the part of the developing countries. That would be an important means of guaranteeing the success of the summit.

Mr. Kmoníček (Czech Republic): My country fully shares the ideas expressed in the statements made by the representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union and by the representative of Estonia on behalf of the Eastern European Group.

The Czech Republic welcomes the Secretary-General's report (A/59/2005), and greatly appreciates the wise guidance that it provides. I will confine myself to making just a few comments concerning the proposals for Security Council reform contained in the report, while stressing that this should not be seen as an attempt to divert attention from all the other important issues raised in the report.

It is well known that the Czech Republic has consistently supported the expansion of the Security Council in both categories of membership, permanent and elected. In particular, we support the aspirations of Germany and Japan to permanent seats, and the allocation of other new permanent seats to Africa, Asia and Latin America. With respect to the category of elected members, we believe that one of the new seats should be allocated to the Eastern European regional group. Consequently, we are strongly opposed to the elimination of the Eastern European Group, since that would open up problems with regard to elections to all United Nations bodies. We would see that not as a reform step but as an anti-reform step.

We stand ready to take an active and constructive part in deliberations on this issue.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): I associate myself and the United Kingdom with the intervention made by the representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union. I would like to support his remarks. I wish also to express my support for, in particular, the Secretary-General's report (A/59/2005).

Britain believes in multilateral diplomacy. We have been staunch supporters of the United Nations since before that first meeting of the General Assembly in London in 1946. Our reasons are quite simple: global problems require global solutions. Today more than ever, the challenges we confront transcend national borders. Alone, we cannot cope with environmental degradation, with terrorism or with poverty. Together, we are much stronger in taking on those vital issues. As Churchill once put it, the only thing worse than working with allies is not having allies with whom to work.

But our faith in the multilateral system is not blind. We recognize that in order to persuade others of its merits, and for it to be the option of choice, we need to demonstrate that multilateralism, and particularly the United Nations, can provide the solutions. Success will rally support for the United Nations and for a cooperative, collective effort to reinforce solutions.

So what are the problems? They are extensive and varied: the 1 billion people in the world living on less than $1 per day; the 3 million who died of AIDS in 2004; the 40 million who have been displaced from their homes; the real threat of terror; and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

There are no neat divisions as to who confronts what. Humanity faces an array of problems but, as the Secretary-General has pointed out, those problems are fundamentally but intricately connected. Security, development and human rights are indissociable: each of them is essential in its own right and basic to the success of the others. Sustained security requires an effort to tackle the full range of human concerns, including development and human rights — while sustainable development cannot exist in the absence of security. As the Secretary-General has clearly shown in

his report, our international efforts should be aimed at promoting people's right to freedom.

The section entitled "Freedom from want" highlights the fact that we must act now if the Millennium Development Goals are to be achieved on time. That means increased development assistance, debt relief, tackling disease, education, sustainable environment and free trade. We agree with the Secretary-General's report that developing countries too need to deliver on their commitment to improve governance and prevent conflict, which are indispensable foundations for sustainable development, particularly in Africa. But acting now also means that the international community needs to make a step change in the amount of aid we provide and in how we provide it. The United Kingdom will play its part by increasing our official development assistance to 0.7 per cent by 2013. We have already doubled our level of aid in the past seven years. But we will also help by promoting the more harmonized delivery of aid and innovative financing mechanisms and by creating the right environment to foster economic growth and employment opportunities.

But let us not forget the Secretary-General's warning that our efforts to defeat poverty and pursue sustainable development will be in vain if environmental degradation and natural-resource depletion continue unabated.

Freedom from fear includes our need to tackle terrorism through a comprehensive strategy, to work against proliferation and to adopt a Security Council resolution on the use of force. Let us recognize that the Charter does not limit a Member State to taking action in self-defence only after an armed attack has occurred. The proposed new peacebuilding commission is particularly welcome with a view to bringing long-overdue coherence and purpose to international efforts in those countries affected by conflict.

The section entitled "Freedom to live in dignity" addresses our continued focus on upholding and extending the rule of law and ensuring respect for human rights — economic and social, as well as civil and political. We welcome the Secretary-General's proposals to give a higher profile to human rights and provide a stronger institutional capacity for them. Let us agree on that now, and not let important but secondary details of organization stand in the way of basic reforms that we know are long overdue. In the world we are all trying to create, how could it ever be acceptable to allow genocide, war crimes or gross violations of international humanitarian law to proceed with impunity? The principle of the "responsibility to protect" must surely be part of the answer.

The United Kingdom believes that the balanced vision set out by the Secretary-General addresses the key interests of all States — not that each State shares all the concerns, or that all the concerns of each State are reflected in the overall strategy. But, taken together, the proposals represent a comprehensive road map for a more effective United Nations. That deserves the support of all members of the General Assembly.

We could, of course, pick and choose. We could have long procedural debates and drafting sessions — to which we are accustomed — to try to finalize texts. But in our view, that approach would be the counsel of conservatism and obstructionism. Instead, we need to capture the vision of the Secretary-General and recognize that his bold ideas offer the best way forward.

The United Kingdom believes that reform is needed in all the institutions and in our working methods. With the Secretary-General's proposals for strengthening the United Nations system, revitalizing the General Assembly, reforming the Economic and Social Council and enlarging the Security Council, we have the opportunity and the means to deliver the reform. We hope that that will lead to new efforts to cut the repetition and duplication in the work of the Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council.

But reform is much more than institutional; it also involves the development of the right policies, the modernization of our systems and the more coherent and effective delivery of United Nations humanitarian and development work. We must take action to strengthen coordination, to increase human capacity and to ensure long-term, predictable funding for United Nations humanitarian and development work. We cannot keep deferring the day when we tackle the waste and inefficiency caused by overlap and duplication among various United Nations agencies. The challenge is how the organs and agencies of the United Nations can work together to cover the wide range of issues that need to be addressed. The emphasis cannot be on preserving what we have always done or on zealously protecting individual prerogatives.

Our Secretary-General has been much maligned in recent times. He enjoys the full support and confidence of the British Government. In our view, he must be given more flexibility to manage the Organization efficiently and effectively. Too often, as our chief executive officer, he is unduly constrained by processes that allow minorities to block constructive ways forward. But in return for greater flexibility, we also need greater transparency and accountability — particularly in the recruitment and professional standards of senior staff.

This is a huge year for the United Nations. The opportunity is there. It is an opportunity for all the countries and groupings within the Assembly, because we will all benefit from the Charter's "larger freedom" through effective multilateralism. Given the necessary political will, the September summit can relaunch the United Nations.

The United Kingdom, by accident of calendar, is in the presidency of the Group of Seven/Group of Eight (G-7/8). We intend this year to drive forward the agenda on Africa and on climate change. The Secretary-General has endorsed the International Finance Facility to raise short-term funding for development; we are working hard to deliver a positive G-7/8 endorsement. The Commission for Africa set out an imaginative and well-received approach to the concerns of Africa. It has the same aim as the Secretary-General's report: to improve living conditions in the widest possible sense.

In July, the United Kingdom will assume the presidency of the European Union (EU). Our commitment will be total. Our intention is to work with our EU colleagues, to build upon the success of the Luxembourg presidency and to deliver a strong European Union contribution to the summit.

Mr. President, your leadership of the General Assembly is charting the way forward. We thoroughly support your approach with the facilitators. You and the Secretary-General have a key part in shaping what we all require: a successful summit. But that success, including the entire package of "In larger freedom", will require a common commitment by nations here and in capitals.

We have been given the prescription; our shared obligation now is to respond to the challenge. The summit must be remembered for what it delivered, not as a failed opportunity.

The President (*spoke in French*): Before adjourning the meeting, I should like once again to draw the attention of Member States to the brief survey concerning the Journal of the United Nations that was distributed to delegations at the start of the meeting. The survey, as I said, is an effort by the Secretariat to further assist in the work of the General Assembly. It will therefore be appreciated if representatives take a few minutes now to fill out the survey and leave it on the table before leaving the Hall. I thank members for their cooperation.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.